

CBS NEWS SPECIAL

"Misunderstanding China"

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CHARLES KURALT: No tickee, no washee. One from Column A and one from Column B and a fortune cookie. You'll be hungry an hour later.

That is about as much as we know about the Chinese. They are a race apart - apart from any other foreigners, Italians or English or French - and a long way apart from us. We visit Chinatown as tourists, in search of the curious and exotic, our minds a kind of chop suey of prejudices.

Our most important tourist, Richard Nixon, is about to land in Peking. The newspapers and the television will be full of news about official receptions, high-level conferences, military postures, international repercussions. But down at the bottom of the bowl is the substance: the history of our attitudes toward China, and that's what we're going to talk about during the rest of this broadcast.

This is a funny story and a dismaying one, and not a trivial story, either. As you will see, the history of attitudes has a lot to do with the history of events. What we think about something naturally influences what we do about it. And what we think about China has always been just perfectly remarkable.

ANNOUNCER: This is a CBS NEWS SPECIAL: "Misunderstanding China," with Charles Kuralt.

(ANNOUNCEMENT)

ANNOUNCER: "Misunderstanding China" continues. Here again is CBS News Correspondent Charles Kuralt.

KURALT: These people know that the events of today have happened a thousand times before. A ruler of barbarians is coming to the capital of their country bearing gifts, possibly to pay tribute. Chinese civilization is an uninterrupted four thousand years old, and sooner or later, the Chinese believe, all enemies crumble or are absorbed. All the barbarians must come to the Middle Kingdom. Richard Nixon is just the latest who has bowed to the inevitable.

That's what they really think about us. An Asian once was asked, "What is your opinion of Western civilization?" And he answered, "I think it would be a good idea." That kind of lofty disdain, rooted in cultural superiority, has always been an attitude of the Chinese toward the West. But when it comes to feelings of superiority, the Chinese have more than met their match in us Americans. Encyclopedia Britannica, early edition: "They are cold, cunning and distrustful." President Theodore Roosevelt: "They are an immoral, degraded and worthless race." Philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson: "As for China, all she can say at the convocation of nations must be . . . 'I made the tea.'"

It hasn't been just on the high level of Presidents, philosophers and encyclopedias that Americans have been contemptuous of the Chinese. The ordinary American has never met an ordinary Chinese, but he dislikes him in his bones. In the last half of the 19th century, we

VOICE: Have you ever had your bones scraped, Captain?

VOICE: Just a bell ringing, but the percussion and the repercussion of sound against your eardrums will soften and destroy them until the sound is magnified a thousand times. (GONGS)

KURALT: This is amusing racism, but it's still racism. The Chinese government officially protested this caricature, but protest from Chinese carried no weight at the box office. They were stereotyped as arch-villain - and even as arch-hero.

"CHARLIE CHAN": Person who throw this knife also kill Alan Colby when he return to claim estate, place body behind secret panel . . .

KURALT: Some Chinese, to be sure, possessed the wisdom of the East. One was a smart detective - Charlie Chan.

"CHAN": . . . then use ultraviolet ray device to make body appear as apparition at seance. Same murderer . . .

KURALT: He was no more a real Chinese than the actors who played him. For 25 years, in 48 films made by four studios, there were six Charlie Chans - none of them Chinese. All of them spoke as if they had discovered English in a fortune cookie.

WOMAN: . . . how can I ever thank you?

"CHAN": Justice, like virtue, brings its own reward . . . Suspicion is only toy of fools . . . Motive like end of string - tied in many knots.

KURALT: Almost any American who thought he knew something about real Chinese probably learned it from Pearl Buck. But all he knew was another stereotype - the simplest of peasants. "The Good Earth" was the most influential film ever made about China. What it showed was the most primitive side of Chinese life. This is the famous locust scene.

MAN: We must fight them with our hands, with shovels, anything!

KURALT: This film tried hard to be different, to see past the image of Chinese as so many ants on a hillside, to give us a closer look at what they really were like. But its effect was patronizing. The Chinese of "The Good Earth" were made to be superstitious, ignorant and almost child-like.

YOUNG MAN: What do you say, father? Shall we ride in this fire wagon?

OLD MAN: I feel safer on your back.

YOUNG MAN: They say it crawls on these iron poles . . .

KURALT: The movies influenced a whole generation of Americans. Now it's happening all over again on the Late Show. Old movies about China have been especially frequent on television lately. But what you see in most of these films is not China - just a stage setting, with casts of thousands carrying spears, dressed as Chinese.

The heroes are always outnumbered, always defending something. Chinese come in hordes. Heroes come in white and usually are the equal of at least a hundred of the yellows. The idea of the Yellow Peril was not born in America, but nothing happened here to change it, either.

MYRNA LOY: I've seen a vision of countless hordes swarming to recapture the world. I've seen them victorious. I've heard the shouts of the dead and the dying drowned by the victorious cries of our people. Genghis Khan comes back! Genghis Khan leads the East against the world! (SHOUTS)

KURALT: Secret panels revealed secret fears. The Yellow Peril wanted to take over the world - and that included our women. The only thing worse than a white woman threatened by a Chinese was one threatened by the entire horde.

MAN: The sacrifice to our gods! (SHOUTS)

KURALT: It was enough to give a girl nightmares. This is Barbara Stanwyck. She is an American missionary being held captive by a Chinese general. If dreams are symbolic, hers reflected something many Americans felt about China. (MUSIC) What is shown in this fantasy is an ambivalence that for many Americans was real - for what we feared most attracted us most. The fantasy we had about ourselves was no less extravagant.

STANWYCK: I'm ready, Bob.

"BOB": But Megan, you can't go with me.

STANWYCK: Of course I can.

"BOB": Now, I'm not going to allow you to risk your life in Chaipei tonight - it's too dangerous . . .

STANWYCK: If there are any bandit generals to be tamed or children to be rescued, I'm in on it. What do you think I came to China for?

KURALT: Like Gregory Peck in this movie, we thought the Chinese were waiting for us. (MUSIC) Hollywood helped make the fantasy part of our folklore. Our best-known actors and actresses led the Chinese to salvation and to safety. (CROWD NOISES)

What was important here was not just our view of China but how we saw ourselves. China served as a background for our humanity - and our superiority. It was a theater for American idealism.

GENE TIERNEY: There's so much work to be done here. Somebody has to do it. Even if we fail, Father, we'd still be leaving something of ourselves in China. The things we're doing, for whatever reasons we're doing them, are the things that are necessary for the people of these villages. They need them - medicine or grace - and we have them to give.

KURALT: We also gave protection, and that sometimes meant protecting some Chinese - from other Chinese. Humphrey Bogart is not really a priest; he is a soldier of fortune. But even he had something to offer Chinese.

BOGART: What are you doing here? (FISTFIGHT)

KURALT: (BUGLES) There was something familiar about the U.S. Cavalry riding to the rescue. In a great many minds, the American West had moved East, where instead of Indians there were Chinese. The same rules applied, whether it was the badlands of Dakota or the badlands of Asia. Watching films like these, no one questioned the sight of American troops marching into an Asian country. (HORSE TROOP NOISES) And in the movies, as in history, it was sometimes hard to tell who was the invader and who the invaded.

"AMERICAN": This compound is American property.

"CHINESE": It is Chinese soil.

"AMERICAN": Let me warn you, Major Chen. If your superior officers are not prepared to go to war against the United States, they will undoubtedly disavow your actions and make amends. Do you understand my meaning? It has happened before.

"CHINESE": All too often before. But we've had enough of that now. I will quote your own history to you, Mr. Bordelas: "If you mean to have a war, let it begin here." (GUNSHOTS)

KURALT: The final shoot-out often looked more like a Western than a war. We've been conditioned to see history that way. (GUNSHOTS) History, like the movies, is a mixture of fantasy and reality - and occasional truth. The truth is, that partly because of our fantasies about the Chinese and about ourselves, we ended up shooting at each other, and we couldn't understand why. Steve McQueen could have been speaking for a whole generation of Americans.

McQUEEN: What happened? What the hell happened? (GUNSHOT)

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

KURALT: (MUSIC) The music was stirring, and so was the idea. In the last World War, China was America's heroic ally. "The Battle of China" is a government film that shows what Americans wanted to believe about China in World War II.

FILM NARRATOR: The oldest and the youngest of the world's great nations, together with the British Commonwealth, fight side by side in the struggle that is as old as China herself: the struggle of freedom against slavery, civilization against barbarism, good against evil.

KURALT: This documentary pretended that we were both fighting for the same things, instead of against the same enemy.

MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK: We in China, like you, want a better world, not for ourselves alone, but for all mankind. And we . . .

KURALT: Madame Chiang Kai-shek was America's favorite Asian heroine. This film, made to motivate American servicemen, soon became an embarrassment and it was withdrawn from circulation after millions had seen it.

In 1944, in our understanding of "Why We Fight," we thought we understood the Chinese, too. But just six years later, we understood the Chinese only as treacherous enemies.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR: The forces of the United Nations are in full retreat before the new horde of Chinese Reds . . .

KURALT: In 1950, in Korea, Americans were fighting Chinese. There had to be an explanation for so quick a reversal, both military and ideological. There was one: they were not the same Chinese; they were Red Chinese.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR: Routed by Chinese Red Army legions, treacherously forced into this war by the unscrupulous leaders of international . .

KURALT: It was a frightening idea for Americans: the Yellow Peril had merged with the Red Peril. What had been only a vague fear in our imaginations suddenly became real.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR: . . . one of the darkest hours in U.S. military history . . .

KURALT: The point here is not history. The point is how fast our thinking changed.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR: . . . the G I's battle the new elements with everything they have, but the latest Communist perfidy in Korea makes the picture grim.

KURALT: If you stop to think about it, it's no wonder our view of the Chinese has always been so hazy and quixotic. We have never known them very well. From Europe we took our most basic ideas, our concepts of law and civilization. From China we took some tea and silk and porcelain.

The Chinese always resisted foreign penetration of their life, but the harder they resisted, the more foreigners showed up. In the middle of the 19th century, Great Britain actually went to war with China for -

of all things - the right to keep bringing opium into Canton. And by the dawn of the 20th century, the foreigners arriving in China included a lot of Americans.

0 The first American troops entered China in 1900. They came uninvited for the best of purposes: to rescue American traders and missionaries from a Chinese uprising against all foreigners. Once there, they stayed. The sight of uniformed Americans landing in China became familiar.

line should have been dropped.

Others had arrived ahead of us. First the British, followed by the French and Germans, the Russians and Japanese. Each power claimed a piece of Chinese territory for itself - except America. We thought that made us different, but to the Chinese, all foreigners looked alike. The foreigners, including the Americans, extracted from the Chinese treaties which granted them territory and special privileges inside China.

We saw the enclaves as outposts of a new frontier. America had a noble name for all this: the Open Door. That meant the doors of China should be open to all nations who wanted to be there. That way no one country alone could rule China. But then, neither could the Chinese.

By today's standards, only a handful of American troops marched into China, but in any number they were offensive to the Chinese. If these were foreign troops parading through the streets of Boston or Atlanta or San Francisco, Americans might see history as the Chinese see it. Constant reminders were the foreign warships in Shanghai harbor, American ships among them - anchored there not as visitors but as occupants. The ships brought the men and the arms. They also brought ideas.

A different army had arrived which almost outnumbered the military: the missionaries. To the new frontier, Americans would bring civilization - and salvation. They saw the prospect of 400 million converts to Christianity. Whatever the intentions of the missionary, to the Chinese, he too was an intruder in uniform - an imperialist of righteousness, off on a 20th-century crusade. Despite the threat of death by strangulation to anyone caught preaching Christianity, the first American missionaries landed in China in 1830. By 1930, nearly half the missionaries in China were American: four thousand of them, Protestant and Catholic, spread out in hundreds of missions. By ship and by sampan, and on foot, they descended upon a civilization four thousand years old and pronounced it heathen. The message was delivered back home in church films called "The Cross and the Dragon," "The Conquest of Cathay," "The Missioner's Cross." They left a lasting impression in America and China alike.

MISSIONARY: Over 450 million Chinese know not God. In all China there are only two and-a-half million Catholics. The milling crowds startled the missionary with a gigantic problem of converting the rest. Pagan worship will show you why missionaries are needed to teach the truth. Pagodas and temples of worship dot the land of these people because they want God and yet have no guides to find Him.

These men, like galley slaves of old, struggle under a yoke, pulling their very hearts out. But they carry a yoke far more terrible, which we do not see. They carry the yoke of Satan, for they are pagan, and this is the yoke which we must lift.

KURALT: The ideas of Christianity must have seemed as curious to a Chinese as they were obvious to us. It would be unfair to dismiss the whole missionary effort as the arrogance of piety. Along with the evangelists came teachers and doctors. There were good works - schools and hospitals. Americans at home began to believe we were making Christians of Chinese. It was a myth. The actual number of converts was less than one percent of China's millions.

There was still another kind of evangelism, to which Americans built monuments. Even more than the military or the missionary, the merchant had ambitions in China. As we've already seen, Hollywood sometimes said it best. It was all summed up in a 1935 movie.

MAN: The company is sending you out to China to dispel the darkness of centuries with the light of a new era. Oil for the lamps of China, gentlemen. American oil. Helping to build a great corporation, helping to expand the frontier of civilization is a great ideal, gentlemen. But you have the youth, the vision and the courage to follow that ideal with the unbounded faith of Galahads going into a strange land.

KURALT: A U.S. Senator once told Americans that "with God's help" they could "lift Shanghai up and up until it's just like Kansas City." In China, we saw the promise of trade, and 400 million customers. To the frontier we would bring free enterprise. That's what brought Americans to China in the first place. It brought the Fords, among others. And the Rockefellers - this is John D. With men came institutions. Coney Island - eight thousand miles from Brooklyn. It was not just American products we sought to export, it was the American Way. The China market was a myth. In goods, it never exceeded more than four percent of all of America's foreign trade.

Converts, Culture, Commerce in China - all were myths that persisted in America - stimulated, in part, by the travelogues. They were exotic adventures: "China's Wonderland as Seen by Doctor Dorsey," "Land of Long Ago," and "China at Work and at Play." This was China at work. (MUSIC) This was China at play, as featured in "Peeking in Peking" and "Ricksha Rhythm." (MUSIC)

For anybody who went to the movies, this was how people lived in China. It wasn't universally true. It certainly wasn't true for Americans in China. In their settlements, foreigners had position and privileges that Chinese didn't have. The Westerner set up his own courts, operated his own banks and post office. In the end, what was important in the relationship between China and the West was not trade statistics or the number of Christian converts, but a system of relationships that was unequal.

The system had a name: extraterritoriality. It was as hard for a Chinese to say as it was for a foreigner. But each knew what it

meant: that in Shanghai, as in dozens of other cities, Americans living in China lived beyond Chinese laws, outside of Chinese traditions. They might as well have been in Kansas City. (BAND MUSIC)

SINGER: Springtime in dear old Shanghai and I'm dancing, sweetheart, with you . . .

KURALT: The only Chinese we knew were the few who imitated Americans. We thought all Chinese wanted to be like us.

SINGER: . . . in my arms, dear, away from harm, dear, we'll let the rest of the world go by . . .

KURALT: It was a romantic notion not shared by most Chinese. Their world was controlled by outsiders and they wanted to change it.

Beginning early in this century, increasing numbers of them believed revolution was the only way. Sun Yat-sen was the first leader we could identify. He was a Christian, educated in the West, and he could speak, in English, of people's rights and a constitution. Americans called him the George Washington of China.

On that was based another myth: that China's desire to be strong and independent was a desire for democracy. Americans confused the Chinese revolution with their own. In the '20's, another revolutionary, Chiang Kai-shek, promised something else Americans wanted to believe in: stability and unity.

But there was no unity in China; there was only rivalry and discontent. The Chinese civil war, in which millions of lives were lost, had already begun. In the '30's, Americans took only passing notice of Mao Tse-tung, who led a peasant army and spoke of agrarian reform.

It all seemed far away from the relative security of the foreign settlements - until Japanese bombers appeared over Shanghai. The year was 1937, marked by some as the true beginning of World War II. Watching these newsreels, literally millions of Americans began to think that China was fighting democracy's war against fascism. The price was high for the Chinese: more casualties than at any battle since Verdun. But in losing the battle, Chiang Kai-shek won the sympathy and support of the West.

This picture, one of the most memorable war photos ever published, dramatized China's struggle, and more important, humanized it. Here was a picture of China for which a generation of Americans had been conditioned in churches and civic groups. It reinforced America's traditional self-image in China: the strong helping the weak. United China Relief rallied Americans to the cause and raised \$50 million by the end of World War II. The threat of fascist aggression was real enough, and compelling. So was the plight of the Chinese. But what we responded to most was an idealized picture of China, embodied in her leaders.

General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek gazed at Americans in sad nobility from the cover of TIME - "Man and Wife of the Year" for 1937. For many Americans, it had truly been a marriage made in heaven. Both were Christians, she a graduate of Wellesley - which seemed to confirm what the missionaries had promised: that China was becoming a democracy, united behind Christian leadership. It was a myth that would defeat American policy throughout the war and after.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR: Well-known to every American is lean, keen Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, undisputed leader and idol of 450 millions of Chinese. Not so well-known is the fact that this man, whom all the world has come to respect for his miraculous strategy, is first a scholar and statesman, a soldier only by necessity. Sharing his counsel and the loyalty of his people are the Soong sisters: Madame H.H. Kung, wife of China's Finance Minister; Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Sun Yat-sen, widow of the sainted founder of the Chinese Republic. Under such leadership it is not surprising that the pattern for Free China was literally made in U.S.A.

KURALT: The country uniting around Chiang Kai-shek was not China but America. America expected that China would help fight the war against Japan if we provided arms and leadership. The arms were carried to China across the Burma Road and flown over the Hump, to be used by the Chinese against Japan. As it turned out, they were used by the Chinese against other Chinese.

As for the leadership, General Joseph Stilwell was to train and mobilize a Chinese army. As it turned out, the Chinese would take neither the advice nor the leadership of a foreigner.

We hoped for a strong and united China, friendly, if not grateful, to the United States. It was a goal pursued by emissaries of high rank, beginning with Vice President Henry Wallace. By the time General Hurley arrived in 1944, it was apparent that the war being fought in China was between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party. We thought that good American common sense could solve that problem, and in 1945, General Marshall got as far as the negotiating table. With him he brought Chou En-lai and an American solution for a coalition government. In America it looked promising. But Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek were only being polite. China's solution was civil war.

The Nationalist army of three million men was eventually equipped with more than three billion dollars' worth of American aid. Chiang Kai-shek thought himself invincible against a peasant army one-third the size. Well, American political solutions could not solve a Chinese problem. Neither could American arms. The Communists won.

In 1949, any American taking a last look at the broad avenues of Shanghai saw the lines of demoralized Nationalist troops in retreat. Chiang Kai-shek and a remnant force of partisans were leaving China. The Americans were leaving, too: a century of involvement in Chinese life was ended. The goods of the merchants went home; the Christianity and democracy went home - all stamped "Refused" by the

culture to which they had been brought. Even before the ships departed, bewildered voices at home spoke accusingly of the "loss" of China. It's clear now that China was never ours to lose.

After the Americans, China went her own way. It was almost as if the Americans had never been there. For the first time in a hundred years, the only troops parading through China's streets were Chinese. Whatever their politics, Chinese were united against foreign domination. The scenes in this film, made by the Chinese, are significant: her troops marching past the American Embassy in Peking; the foreign flags just before they were lowered at Shanghai.

*- embassy was
in Peking
in 1949.*

The Chinese felt that what they were casting off was the yoke of imperialism. And to them, that was not just a propaganda slogan - imperialism was all around them. Everywhere were signs of America's role in the Chinese civil war. China's new leaders rode in a captured 1941 Buick. Much of their army was equipped with American weapons - also captured from their enemy. That made America an enemy too.

And there, in the tradition of emperors before him, stood Mao Tse-tung. He was not the first Chinese peasant to win power by rebellion. His victory didn't make sense to many Americans; to many Chinese, it did.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

KURALT: (CROWD SHOUTING) Americans have felt a great many more things about China than we have known. Since 1949, even more than before, China has been more a hazy idea than a firm reality. It could hardly be otherwise: Americans have been excluded from China by a government which, we chose to declare, did not exist. China's politics have made no sense to us. Neither have her passions.

(MAC TSE-TUNG SPEAKING) This meeting of the Chinese Communist Party was held in 1969 following the political turmoil known as the Cultural Revolution. All Americans know of this event is what they've learned from reporters who weren't there. All they've seen of it is this Chinese government film.

That's how news about China has reached America for 22 years - in bits and pieces, almost all acquired second-hand. Left to our imaginings, modern Chinese didn't seem very much different from the hordes of Fu Manchu. They did fit a new stereotype: our images of Communism and of the Cold War.

Americans saw this - and little else - and called it madness. The only pictures of China which reached the West were pictures of a fanatic people trained from childhood to take aim on a single target - the United States. Even after ping-pong and Presidential diplomacy, more than half the American people still see China as the greatest threat to world peace. That could be true - or it could be our imagination. That's one of the things we need to know about China.

On-camera

There are many things we need to know about China. In the past, we took our own values to China, only to find out that the Chinese didn't share them. For example, we valued individualism and found it hard to understand that Chinese did not. From the time of Confucius, conformity to the group - not individual liberties - was what the Chinese valued. Now, as we get more information and pictures from China, we may discover that many of our conceptions have been misconceptions, and that what is happening there is neither entirely as we've imagined nor entirely as the Chinese would have us believe.

Reality is beneath the surface. Seeing this view of Shanghai again, for example, we may think that nothing has changed. It only looks that way. Shanghai was not just a city, it was a symbol: the foreigners' capital of China. Once, not very long ago, a hundred thousand foreigners lived here. Now they and their warships are gone. It's the foreigner who's the curiosity in Shanghai now.

This is the city that once served as background to a thousand sinister stories, one of the crime capitals of the world. Everybody knew what it meant to be shanghaied. (HARBOR SOUNDS) From all reports, it's different now. Men no longer pull other men around in rickshas. The pedicab represents for Chinese at least a small step toward mechanization and dignity. And there are no prostitutes or opium dens or flies, either. Shanghai is one of the safest - and dullest - big cities in the world.

To the Chinese, Shanghai is the city which symbolized their weakness. Today they use it to demonstrate their independence.

The Chinese, after a century of almost continuous war and civil war, are determined to make sure that history does not repeat itself. Foreign solutions did not solve Chinese problems. It shouldn't be surprising that in 1949 Chinese set out to solve their problems their own way. The first thing they had to do was to rebuild, literally from the ground up. (CHANTING LABORERS) The use of men instead of machines was not a Communist idea; that has always been an inescapable part of Chinese life. Pictures like these of life in China were not new to Americans. But in Communist China we took them to mean regimentation, slave labor.

It's possible that, in some ways at least, life in China has not changed as much as our view of it has changed. The Communists were not the first Chinese to want to improve life in China. Modernization had been a goal of Chinese patriots since the late 19th century. In the middle of the 20th century, the Chinese tried to mass-produce steel in homemade backyard furnaces. As a short cut to industrialization, it didn't work. But it illustrated China's purpose: to change, as quickly as possible, a weak country dominated by outsiders into a strong country dependent on no one. (INDUSTRIAL NOISES)

At first, help came from the Russians. By 1960, they too had gone home. It surprised many in the West, but the Russian presence proved as temporary and as unwelcome as that of any other foreigner in China.

The Chinese revolution was a matter of pride as well as politics, and it took place not in the factories but in the fields. Eight of every ten Chinese are peasants. China is not yet an industrialized country. It is an ancient, agrarian state with an ancient problem: too many people and too little productive land. Of first importance to China is how much can be produced on the land. No other country, after all, has ever had to feed four and then six and now eight hundred million people.

In the past, countless Chinese have died of starvation. Much of the past survives in China today, but there is no evidence of starvation. Some food is rationed - grain was rationed last year - but apparently there's enough to go around. Life still is hard in China and the peasant still is poor - but it doesn't cost him very much to live. For example, meat is said to cost about 40 cents a pound; a man's cotton suit, about six dollars.

In the past, countless Chinese have died of disease. China does not provide many firm or reliable statistics, but American doctors who visited there recently reported health care in even the most distant villages, and no sign of epidemics.

In China, such changes in the lives of ordinary people are revolutionary. Traditionally, what has mattered most to the peasant is not politics but survival. More may be surviving now than before, but not without politics. That too has become an inescapable part of Chinese life. Even if the government's message has to be carried on the backs of Party workers, it is being taken into every corner of China, however remote.

For the first time in Chinese history, political ideas are being projected into everybody's lives. In China today, government no longer ignores the peasant - but neither can the peasant any longer ignore the government. (CROWD NOISES) Never before, of course, has any government tried to unite 800 million people behind a single political idea.

Mao Tse-tung's problem is how to control an old and enormous country while moving it from the past to the future. His solution is to try to change not only how Chinese live, but how they think. For a while, it seemed that the only thing Chinese were taught to think was what he thought. At one time, so many books of Mao's thought were published, there was a paper shortage.

Today, Chinese are studying many books, especially of science and technology. Education is organized like everything else in China: to reach the people. Twenty years ago that was impossible: an estimated 90 percent of the Chinese could not read or write. Today, the estimate is that 90 percent can. The Chinese have none of our intellectual freedoms. The teachings of Mao serve the revolution, as the teachings of Confucius once served the emperor. Now, as then, the purpose of education is to train the people to serve the state. For Mao, that means all the people, including 300 million schoolchildren - nearly half China's population.

It is oppressive or it is idealistic - depending on how you look at it. (CROWD NOISES) There have been violent excesses. The Cultural Revolution was a power struggle for control of the Chinese Communist Party, which may not be settled yet. Throughout China, Mao attacked his political opponents as he has attacked every other problem of the revolution - by mass demonstrations in support of his leadership. From what little we know of the years 1966 to 1969, careers were ruined, production was disrupted, schools were closed. In some instances, the army had to restore order.

What happened here was that our most persistent stereotype was revived: the one of China as a fanatical, faceless horde. But every crowd has faces, and now that the wheel of history has taken another turn, it's possible that our ideas about the Chinese will take another turn, too. The hard lines of political realities are beginning to soften, and we may rediscover some realities of another kind. (MUSIC) That Chinese children do not always march with toy guns, for example - that sometimes they imitate elephants. (SOUNDS OF CHILDREN AT PLAY)

The diplomatic initiatives of the present moment may not lead to an exchange of ambassadors. If they lead to an exchange of glances, that would be a beginning.

These pictures were taken by a Swiss, a German and a Japanese. Americans have not seen much of ordinary Chinese, of families doing ordinary things. For more than 20 years, Americans and Chinese have known of each other only what their governments wanted them to know.

For most of our history, China has been a weak country and a distant one and it didn't make much difference how we viewed the Chinese. That is no longer the case. There is the danger that we will now substitute the sentimental stereotype - of Chinese being just like us - for the sinister stereotype - of the inhuman Chinese. Neither image has served us well in the past. The hope is that now we will put aside the images of China, the statistics of China, the mystique of China, and begin to see the Chinese more realistically. We may not like what we see, but we may find out that most Chinese resemble neither Charlie Chan nor Fu Manchu.

ANNOUNCER: "Misunderstanding China" will continue.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

ANNOUNCER: Here again is Charles Kuralt.

KURALT: In the last two decades, China as an issue has divided America - played a part in senatorial witch hunts and presidential campaigns and great national debates. China as a military power has been involved in war against us. We have argued about the Chinese and fought the Chinese and all this time, about the Chinese we have known hardly anything at all. With that kind of past, Chinese and Americans are not likely to fall quickly into each other's embrace.

But President Nixon has begun the journey toward some kind of understanding. Nobody knows where this road leads, but it is a long road, and if we're going to get there we had better travel light.

There is some baggage we will not need: the old movies and pulp magazines, the old fears and false images - our emotional inheritance. That's too heavy a burden. Maybe we can leave it all behind.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

ANNOUNCER: This has been a CBS NEWS SPECIAL: "Misunderstanding China."

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

CHARLTON HESTON: Right shoulder, arms! (MARTIAL MUSIC) Here, take my hand. Forward, march!